

*Builder* that the most aristocratic district of London was little better off as to cleanliness than many more obscure alms; that in Belgrave, close to the square, pressing upon handsome and costly abodes, all the abominations of slaughter-houses were in full swing; and to make the matter more palpable a visit this day to a stable lane called Kinnerson-street, out of Moicombe-street, running direct from the square, discovered no less than three slaughter-houses within the scope of thirty yards at the end of the cul de sac! two of them are in juxtaposition, and occupy together about 30 feet by 35 feet! In these two were twenty-six sheep and two oxen deprived from the morning's slaughter; oftentimes six oxen and a score of sheep are driven on a market-morning into each and every of these receptacles, and these are reserved with scarce room to lie down, through night and day, until required for the stalls. Maddened with driving and cribbed up together, their bellowings and bleatings are of a most unearthly character, and so horribly distressing that the residents within 50 yards can hardly sleep at nights; the healthy and strong are distressed to have their ears riven by plaintive lowings which in imagination are often pictured as the agonised struggle for life; but what must be the sensations of invalids and nervous persons to whom sleep even in quietude is a balm and solace difficult of attainment.

One of the householders in the vicinage lately made a modest application on the subject to the Board of Health, Whitehall, and on the 15th October received a reply from the highest authority, stating that the statute 11 & 12 Vict. c. 123, gave a remedy by application to the parochial Board of Guardians, whose duty it should be "to take such steps as to them may appear necessary for the abatement of the nuisance;" but the chief of the sanitary commission alleged that his board had no power to interfere!

Now, what the Board of Guardians may be that is so referred to, is matter of doubt. Is it the Board of Guardians for the poor? If so, that board has been applied to; or is it the Trust Board for the Grosvenor estate? For a builder has already applied to them, without success. Or is the Act effective only to appoint commissioners of health, and inoperative, inasmuch as these functionaries have only power to consult and to receive salaries, but none to redress the crying evil complained of!

Christmas is coming, and with it whole hecatombs of oxen to supply the shambles loaded with British and foreign beef. Spring (the season) is in prospect, and with it the lengthening day, brightening sun, and the equally sure return of pestilential vapours from the charnel-houses, heaps of offal, blood, and refuse, the cartage whereof beyond the sphere of annoyance is in itself a grievance. Still nothing has been done, nor will he until the press exposes and cries down the nuisance.

A memorial has been sent to the Poor-law Guardians by the inhabitants who dare complain. The poor still nearer have suffered yet more, but complain not: they affirm all the horrors of the infliction, and only add, "but we must say nothing."

Paris is a century before us in this particular: in that capital not one beast is slaughtered within the precincts: they have abattoirs (four of them) outside the walls. No complaint is ever made of the meat sold to their markets: it is supplied in carcasses, as indeed it is to most of the small butchers of London. In a city so overgrown as ours, there might be exceptions made by licence to such butchers as Mr. Slater, of Kensington, who sends his beasts to his own pastures from market, in order to freshen them; but certainly there should be no exception in favour of such as slaughter within the densely populated city and town. Much of the London supply comes by rail, and comes in good condition: all the rest should be provided under legislative care by abattoirs, at four or more great suburban stations: by such a regulation the quality of animal food must be much improved, the trade itself much accommodated,

the atmosphere would be less vitiated, and the health of the masses improved.

QUONDAM.

#### OUR HOUSE FRONTS.

YOUR correspondent Mr. Sullivan's suggestions for representing the construction (of floors, &c.) on the exterior of buildings, has many points which recommend it. In the first place it would afford great facilities for ventilation, by the introduction of cast-iron, or, better still, of perforated wrought-iron panels in the masonry. Or, where this is not required, a very nice effect would be produced by the use of Minton's ornamental tiles, which might be made as thick as ordinary bricks, and seem particularly well adapted for external chromatic decoration.

The principle is, undoubtedly, a sound one, but would require considerable discrimination in applying it. It would appear highly ridiculous, for instance, to have triglyphs or a dentil course at the level of the ground floor. But in lieu thereof, the depth of the band could be increased so as to form a good solid plinth for the base mouldings of the piers. The spaces below the windows could be filled up with a flat geometrical pattern slightly in relief, which might also be in brick, or a thick facing tile, which would be a simple, and, to my mind, much more satisfactory style of ornamentation than sticking up a number of meaningless cement ornaments, such, for instance, as the sham trusses to some of the windows in New Cannon-street.

From his remarks on the use of timber externally, it is clear that he alludes to buildings without the range of the Metropolitan Buildings Act, for that entirely precludes the use of timber in facades, and necessitates such follies as slate or iron barge-boards, and thus at once closes a vast field for the display of constructive decoration, such as one occasionally sees and admires in the old parts of London, and more often in provincial towns,—timber quartering filled in with brick-work—spacious, hospitable-looking, projecting windows—a profusion of cantilevers, mouldings, ends of girders, &c. grotesquely carved. But this grotesqueness we could well dispense with, introducing in its place designs and execution of a higher character than those old works possess, and which, doubtless, were the best they could then command,—retaining, in short, the picturesqueness of mass, and combining therewith, why may I not say? the delicate beauty of Greek details and the constructive truth of Greek designs. For so long as we continue to copy in the shameless Chinese manner, which is now the fashion, so long will architecture remain in the degraded position it now holds. Why cannot architects, like modern landscape-painters, form a new school on the old foundation? surely there is as much scope for the one as the other. Another of the chief causes of failure in modern street architecture, is the want of a spirit of independence in the architects themselves, for while they, in spite of their own opinion, succumb to the dictates of some pennywise tradesman, who stands out for two or three inches more plate glass, we shall continue to meet with pantomimic tricks of houses suspended in the air; and as they themselves will continue to grovel,—for as professors of a degraded art, they are themselves degraded. Surely, Sir, our worthy shopkeepers might, without injuring their trade, have their windows somewhat smaller, and handsome piers or pilasters, which, if of stone, would produce a much richer effect than the unmeaning blankness which characterises the generality of shops, as, indeed, two or three instances you have noted amply testify.

There have been some premises recently erected, not half a mile from the Royal Exchange. Where the piers of the two lower stories are carried up a height perhaps of 25 feet, not more than 20 inches wide, they are surmounted with a cornice (disfigured, by-the-by, with a zinc ventilating-tube), and the piers above are perhaps 3 feet 6 inches wide. The openings, with the exception of a transom, the thickness of the entresol floor, are filled

with plate glass. Now, there are many points in the composition, and particularly some of the details, which are good. But the work, as a whole, looks stilted and unsatisfactory, and any one who considers carefully the reason, cannot fail to perceive that the architect has not used his own free will, but has made the best of a bad job: he has, in fact, allowed his opinion to be overruled. W. L.

#### THE NAVAL DRY DOCK AND HYDRAULIC LIFT AT PHILADELPHIA.

THE United States Dry Dock at this port has recently been completed and successfully tested. An account of it appears in the Journal of the Franklin Institute for June last, from which we gather the following details:—The dock and appendages are described as being the largest in the world. The lifting power consists of nine sections, six of which are 145 feet long inside, and 148 feet over all, by 32 feet wide, and 11½ feet deep. Three of them are of the same length and depth as the others, but 2 feet less in width. The gross displacement of the nine sections is 10,037 tons, gross weight 4,145 tons, leaving a lifting power of 5,892 tons, which far exceeds the weight of any vessel yet contemplated. The machinery for pumping out the sections consists of two engines of 20, and two of 12 horse-power. In connection with the sections (which form the lifting power of the dock), is a large stone basin, 350 feet long, 226 feet wide, and 12 feet 9 inches deep, with a depth of water of 10 feet 9 inches at mean high tide. At the head of this basin are two acts of ways, each being 350 feet long, and 26 feet wide. These ways are level, and consist of the bed pieces, which are three in number, and firmly secured to a stone foundation. The central way supports the keel, while the side ways receive the weight of the bilge. These ways are of oak, and are finished off to a smooth surface. On the top of the bed pieces or fixed ways, come the sliding ways or cradle, which are also 350 feet long and 26 feet wide, so constructed as to admit of being adjusted to the length of any vessel. The power directly applied in hauling up and pushing down ships is hydraulic, with a cylinder having a ram 15 inches in diameter, and 3 feet stroke and a power of 800 tons, and hydraulic pumping engines attached. A steamship of 2,600 tons burthen was started by a power of 250 tons, and drawn thereafter by a power of 150 tons, 260 feet in six hours. "It will at once be seen," adds our authority, "that the capacity of this dock exceeds that of the stone docks at New York, Boston, and Norfolk combined; for united they can take but three vessels, while here, two of our long; war steamers may be hauled out on the ways, and two frigates lifted on the sections." The advantages that must result from the facilities of repairing a vessel elevated into light and air over one sunk in a stone dock, are very great, and have only to be seen to be appreciated.

#### PREVENTION OF COLLISIONS ON RAILWAYS.

"Salus populi, suprema est lex."

ON ARRIVING in your number of the 20th of November last, an article headed "Prevention of Railway Collisions," and having recently suffered from one of these disgraceful occurrences, I proceeded to read it with some avidity. I was much disappointed to find the object of the writer was not to prevent collisions, but to diminish their awful consequences, by the use of fenders composed of powerful steel springs. So, honour to the humane! Now, as the great object is to endeavour to prevent collisions on railways, I will proceed with my remarks.

I will first ask this pertinent question. Has any one of the numerous collisions which have occurred been proved to have happened on investigation, from pure accident? The answer is distinctly, No; not one. Then, their recurrence must be remediable,—within the power of human provision to prevent them. Secondly, What is the cause of these frequent collisions? Solely, parsimony, in order to create the greater dividends to be paid to